



From a Venetian Calle

Lady Lindsay





FROM A VENETIAN CALLE

Companion Volume

FROM A
VENETIAN BALCONY



From a Venetian Calle

by

Lady Lindsay

Pen Sketches by

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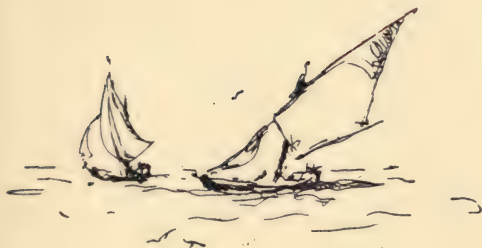
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*"Venezia bela fabricata in mare,
Chi no te vede no te pol stimare."*

A Venetian saying.



PREFACE

THE author, in answer to various enquiries, desires to state that the poems in this volume (similarly to those contained in her former volume "From a Venetian Balcony") are all absolutely original, though of course they are—whenever treating of legends—founded on the ancient legends of Venice and other parts of Italy. The only translation is the lullaby "Nanna Ninna," of which the Italian original is therewith given. "March and the Shepherd" is a shortened and metrical adaptation of the narrative given in Signor Nieri's "Racconti Popolari Lucchesi." It should be said that "Maria Robusti" and "To a Fire-Fly" have already been published in "Poems of Love and Death" by Lady Lindsay.

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FROM A VENETIAN *CALLE*

SWIFT flows the tide of life along the
narrow street,

In cool and grateful shade,

And on our ear there falls an ever-surg-
ing beat—

The tramp of hurrying steps and tap of slippered
feet,

As figures pass or fade.

The women flaunt gay hues in simplest poorest
dress ;

Now here some fellow bears

Great paniers filled to brim with garden
loveliness :

White lilies, purple peas, and roses in a
tress—

And chaffers for his wares.

14 FROM A VENETIAN CALLE

Upon the scorching bridge the barefoot babies
play ;

One, older, throws a line.

Yon gondola flits by, nor will a moment stay—
“ *Premì, premì !* ” the cry—so glides out on
the way

Where wider waters shine.*

* (*A calle is a narrow street or wynd. It is possible to walk over all Venice by means of the calli and innumerable connecting bridges.*)



CASA DELL' ANGELO

THIS is the story, true as day,
 Of the House of the Angel over the way.
 'Twas there dwelt a miser old and grim ;
 No one was ever acquaint with him.
 No creature went in, no creature came out,
 The shutters were closed, no soul was about.
 The doors were tight locked, the lights burned
 dim ;
 As a sepulchre hushed was the house alway,
 And nigh to that *calle* none chose to stray.

For the Doge and the saints the miser cared
 naught,
 To the church and the priests he never gave
 aught.
 'Twas murmured that he
 From morn until late alone would be,
 With for servant an ape
 Of appalling shape—
 A thing that was crippled and loathly to see.

He was hard, he was cruel,
His deeds were dark.
He owned many a jewel
And ducat and mark,
But the widows he spurned,
And to orphans a cold deaf ear he turned.

Till one day at last
This chanced to befall :—
As a holy man pass'd,
He heard a shrill call,
And so was let in
To the harbour of sin,
And stayed with the miser to speak and dine,
And ate of his food and tasted his wine.

'Twas a strange, strange sight—the ape stood by,
And changed the dishes and waited a-nigh ;
The holy man, as he saw it, shook,
And scarce of the viands a mouthful took.
But, when that evening was well-nigh spent,
On the monster he bent
A steadfast look,
And muttered some words as he crossed
himself,
For a full exorcising of devil and elf.

Behold then ! the ape leaped forth from the
room,

With a wild weird yell, and a thunderous boom ;
Nor door nor window it sought, but crashed
Through the wall of stone that shivered and
smashed.

Away it sped ;

Out to the tenebrous night it dashed,
And none knew whither it flew or fled ;

If haply it there

Made a path through the air,

Or deep in the narrow canal down fell.

But this is certain it ne'er came back,

And with rout and wrack

Was the sudden end of that fearsome spell.

Then the holy man prayed ;

And, greatly afraid,

The miser fetched out his golden gains ;

Then and there, for sure

For sake of the poor,

He bestowed them all,

Both great and small,

So cleansed his hands of their woful stains.

Nor rested till, in the gaping space

Of the palace wall—

Whence the demon had taken its hurried flight,
Where the stone had been shattered
As out the thing clattered—
He framed a panel of sweet delight.
“’Tis the House of the Angel,” in Venice we
say,
For still to-day
A sculptured angel of beauteous face
Stands yonder, to mark the wondrous place
Where the wrong made way for the right.

MORNING SONG AT VENICE

I SAW the wan and slender moon,
 Ex-Queen in early June,
 Poised high above San Giorgio's tower.
 This was the dawning hour.

A roseate flush engirdled all the world,
 And coming Day his banners quick unfurled
 To gleam where, on the still lagoon,
 Lay sleeping Venice—a white lily flower.

Let us go forth !
 The whispering wind creeps hither from the
 north.
 He tells of storm and drifting snows,
 For well he knows
 How on the great peaked Alps are
 piled
 Snow-wreaths and rocks of glaciers wild.
 'Tis there he loves to rave and blow ;
 But here he only mutters low,

And gently fills the red sails wide
Of boats that on smooth waters ride,
'Mid weedy tracts and muddy leas,
Where dusky figures oft are seen,
Hovering as petrels, bent to glean
Shelled harvest of these inland seas.

Far yonder, through the shimmering mist,
Blue islets rise, uplifted high
Above the sea-line to the sky,
By some strange power of mirage kiss'd—
Blue islets, each one tower'd, and set,
As though some sapphire drops had met,
'Twixt opal and dim amethyst ;
While Fancy lilts unto our ear,
From Palestrina's wave-lapped shore,
The music that a boy could hear
And weld to shape long years before—
Soft-echoing to us yet.



Place Montelto
1911

CASA DE' SPIRITI

(*Dedicated to Mrs Humphreys Johnston*)

By the *Casa de' Spiriti*

Wild winds are flying,

Round the *Casa de' Spiriti*

Soft winds are sighing ;

They are singing strange legends,

And Echo's replying.

The winds roam as minstrels

Grown garrulous, old ;

The tales that they tell to us

Oft they've re-told,

And yon gossip, Dame Echo,

No secret may hold.

Yet we comprehend dimly,

And ask : " Was it so ?

The king of the revels,
In times long ago,
Was he Titian, whose genius
And glory we know ?

“ Did he bid painter-comrades
Come hither to feast,
Till the blue night grew pale
As Aurora climbed east,
Till the day called to labour,
And the gay laughter ceased ?

“ Or perchance, winds that murmur
With the inflowing tide,
Ye be ghosts whose shrill voices
Fain hitherward ride ?
Weird wraiths of dead smugglers
Who their trade darkly plied ?

“ Or mourn ye sad corpses
Dropt secret, in haste,
Unavenged of their slaughter,
To drift o'er the waste,
From the shade of these ilex
And bays interlaced ? ”

*

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By the *Casa de' Spiriti*

Sweet winds are creeping,
In the silent rose-garden
Nymph Echo is sleeping—
The lagoon is alight where
Warm sun-rays are leaping.

From the *Casa de' Spiriti*

Outward we gaze ;
The mountains lie hidden
In an opaline haze ;
The fisher-boats slowly
Track the still water-ways.

MARIA ROBUSTI

“ I WILL not leave thee, father ; let no fear
Of such farewell steal sombre through thy
mind.

I will not leave thee ; nay, no gilded court
Of Maximilian or of Ferdinand,
Or Philip, king of Spain and Spanish realms,
Shall tempt me hence. Thy love has plaited
bonds

That bind me—first to thee through tender-
ness,

Next to our Venice for my loyalty.

What? should I live and count sad morning
hours,

Lagging as might my steps, in some far land,
Remembering how no more I'd haste to thee
And clasp thee for Aurora, taking this
My place beside thee, 'mid thy canvases,
Thy brushes, easels, colours, yea, thy work?
Was I not trained thy right hand, ever nigh,

Doing the will the head commanded it ?
And shall that hand be parted from its lord ?
Kiss me again, my father, just as when
Thy Marieta, clad in boyish dress,
First leaned, a baby student, at thy knee.
We women, gladdened by the call of Fame,
Deem Love yet nobler ; haply thus we lose,
Oft, ay so oft, the prize each artist seeks—
Bartering our glory for a faithful heart.

“ See, I will bide ; I’ll fetch my lute and sing
The very songs that please thy fancy best,
And win a smile from thy grave lips once
more ;

While proud Venetian lords and lovely dames
Shall hasten hither in their gondolas,
Praying that Tintoretto and his child
Give to their features immortality.

“ I will not leave thee, father. Let the years
Pass on ; we’ll cling yet closer—thou and I.”

THE PIGEONS OF ALTINO

FOR three long days the people prayed :

“ Lord ! whither shall we go ?

Shew us Thy will, grant us Thine aid,

And save us from the foe ! ”

Uprose the pigeons then in flight

The people all among ;

The parent birds held safe and tight,

Clasped by their beaks, their young.

Those brave wings quickly cleft the air

Across the blue lagoon ;

They sped unto an island bare,

A lonely sandy dune.

“ ’Tis there, for sure,” the people cried,

“ That God our home has willed ;

’Tis there, the birds have testified ;

There let us plant and build.”

A-many towers were builded there,
To guard yon island shore ;
The birds, that earned both love and care,
Are sacred evermore.

MASSARIOL

KNAVISH imp in cot and castle,
Sometimes angered, sometimes droll,
Bogie, fairy, goblin, sprite,
Mischief-fraught for pure delight—
Where's that elf *Massariol*?

All the tricks that tease the household
Are the doing of that troll ;
He it is who steals the cream,
Roughly shakes the babe in dream—
Where's that elf *Massariol*?

When for fish or fruit at market
You've to pay some extra toll ;
When your purse you cannot find,
No good fortune to your mind—
Where's that elf *Massariol*?

Sure 'twas he that yester-evening
From the pan the *pastè* stole ;
In the dusk the villain flew
Many a narrow *calle* through—
Where's that elf *Massariol*?

A DAUGHTER OF VENICE

*Marianela,**Maria bela,*

Walks by her sisters amid the crowd.

She is young, she is fair,

With red-gold hair ;

Her eyes are lustrous, her presence is proud.

She hies to the *Piassa* to hear the band,

And flutters a fan in her sun-brown'd hand.

Her head is bare of kerchiefs or veils,

But down to her ankles her black shawl trails,

And her gown is pink as Aurora's wing.

Her slip-shod feet

Go tap, tap, tap, on the stone-paved street.

There shines on her finger a golden ring,

And there shines a smile on her merry mouth—

*Marianela**Maria bela,*

Many a youth a song would sing

Unto thee, fair child of the South !

AN ISLAND NEAR VENICE

ON either side the broad lagoon,
And overhead the part-veil'd moon ;
Here, long low buildings lying sheer
Where shallow water glistens clear.

And one tall tower uprises dark,
The heart of it a golden spark ;
A boat moored where the grass creeps thin,
And all the world—that's you—therein.

GIOVANNI TO MARIANINA

You in a gondola,
I at your side,
Who shall my happiness
Dare to deride?

You with a red rose
'Twixt finger and thumb,
I, lips a-trembling,
Timid and dumb.

You with the heart of me
Breaking at touch,
I with the heart of me
Aching o'ermuch !

THOUGHTS OF NINA

RED-BROWN sails on an opal sea,
Bear my heart where it longs to be.

Swallows encircling the belfry high,
Haste and twitter her window nigh.

Vines that wreathe at her garden-gate,
Bid her the evening hour to wait.

Drop at her feet, O moaning dove !
And croon to her of my constant love.

GONDOLIER'S SONG

NINA, Nina, come to me soon,
Come with the sun, or come with the moon.

Come when the stars gleam bright on high,
Come when the rain-cloud goes rolling by.

Come to me out of the shimmering deep,
Come when I'm waking, come when I sleep.

Nina, Nina, come to me soon,
Swift as a bird o'er the wide lagoon.

Nina, *Morosa*, hearken my song—
Flower o' my heart, I have loved thee so long !

LOVE SONG

*(In Imitation of many Popular Venetian
Songs)*

IN the midst of yon blue sea
Stands a beauteous golden tree,
And a golden bird sings on it, Nina, just for
you and me.

There the leaves are richly gilded,
And the boughs are strongly builded,
And the mellow fruit is ripened, Nina, ripe for
you and me.

We will make our dainty nest
Where the wild waves lie at rest,
We will make a dainty nest, Nina, just for you
and me.

On that golden tree a-swinging,
While our love is scarce beginning—
But the years are golden fruit, Nina, ripe for
you and me.

NEAR VERONA

GREY clouds lie low on yonder Apennines ;
The mulberry boughs are heavy-drenched with
rain ;

Across the red earth of the Lombard plain
A-many runnels draw their watery lines :

While vine-wreaths, garlanding from tree to tree,
Seem poor of strength their glistening leaves to
lift ;

And ghost-like, 'mid dank fields, white oxen
drift,

Patient where'er their quiet labours be.

JUNE SONG

IN the plains of Lombardy,
That's where I would gladly be—
When the mulberry boughs are stript,
And the young vines, tendril-tipt,
Fling their wreaths from tree to tree.
Scarlet poppies wake and peer
Whence the green wheat bursts to ear—
That's where I so fain would be,
In the plains of Lombardy !

See beyond, the tender lines
Of the sunny Apennines !
Ne'er a cloud drifts overhead.
Gay in kirtles blue or red
From the homestead flock the maids,
Eager for the green leaf raids.
Swift and strong, they sit at ease
Perched on ladders, busy bees—
Nina, would I were with thee
In the plains of Lombardy !

IN-COMING BOATS

SAILS white and yellow,
Sails brown and red,
From beyond the Lido,
On a warm wind sped—

Are ye wild-flow'r petals?
Are ye butterflies,
Hovering where the waters
Meet the pearly skies?

Are ye leaves of Autumn
Pluckt of classic trees,
Sent with peaceful message
By the Hesperides?

Sails riding inland,
Gold, or red, or white,
Bring—as may a poet's thoughts—
Colour, grace, and light!

GAROFANO

CARNATION at my dear one's ear,
 Whisper some word from me ;
Some message he would joy to hear
When he his fisher-boat shall steer
 Upon the open sea.

But yester-eve at sunset hour
 I plucked thee from the ledge ;
Behind his ear he placed the flower—
A kiss, and it became my dower,
 Bestowed for lover's pledge.

Tell him, though sweet the soft winds sigh,
 More sweet are thoughts that yearn,
And bid thy perfume breathe how I
Send forth to him no chill goodbye,
 But prayers for swift return.

TO A FIRE-FLY

TINY flame of wondrous birth
Flitting o'er the dusky hedges,
Glimmering deep in banks and sedges,
Jewel-like on dark-browed earth :

Drift thou to my outstretched palm ;
Give the secret whence thou comest,
Whither haply now thou homest
While the night is fair and calm.

Didst thou sail from near or far ?
Art perchance a segment, riven,
Through wide leagues of ether driven,
From some fiery falling star ?

As by stilly ways we pass,
Fade San Gimignano's towers,
Richer floats the scent of flowers
Where thy fellows fleck the grass.

White upon the broad white road
Come the oxen, freed from labour,
Ghostly, slow, each by his neighbour,
Bearing neither yoke nor load.

So their peasant lords themselves
End the work of vine and valley,
On the quiet paths to dally,
Where the fire-flies dance with elves.

Elf-like, art thou magic born?
Cased with gold to shine in blueness,
Stript and swarth at each day's newness,
Exorcised by touch of morn?

Turned to but a squalid thing—
Poor dull insect, small, unsightly.
Who should guess thy power, that nightly
Ridest on a radiant wing?

Nay, thou seem'st a holy spark
Dropt from out the lamp of angels,

Sent to teach of God's evangels :
How the Light may shine through dark.

Fire-fly, blaze across the plain !
Float upon the breath of summer !
Thus to-morrow, saintly comer,
Tell thy parable again !

MARCH AND THE SHEPHERD

(A Legend of Lucca)

March

"WHITHER, shepherd, whither away
Wilt lead thy flock to pasture to-day?"

Shepherd

"Bound we are to seek the height,
Where the sun is shining and skies are bright."

(March raises a tempest on the mountain.

*Later, he once more accosts the
shepherd.)*

March

"Tell me, shepherd, was't warm the air?
Was sunshine pleasant? Were soft winds
fair?"

Shepherd

“Yea, we had naught of wind or rain ;
My flock moved happy across the plain.”

(Next day, March returns.)

March

“Whither, shepherd, whither away
Wilt lead thy flock to pasture to-day ?”

Shepherd

“Methinks my sheep content should feed
Down in the vale in a verdant mead.”

(March drenches the valley with tempestuous rain. Later, he once more accosts the shepherd.)

March

“Tell me, shepherd, how fared thy sheep
Where streams run silver and grass grows
deep ?”

46 MARCH AND THE SHEPHERD

Shepherd

"Nay, 'twas glorious on hill and rock ;
The pasture is scarce, but sweet to the flock."

*(The shepherd continues the game of
cross-purposes for some days.
March becomes furious at last, and
seeks out April.)*

March

"April, April, dear brother mine,
Lend me a day from that month of thine."

*(April lends March a day, and presently
March visits the shepherd, who is
sitting shivering by his lonely
fireside.)*

March

"How now fares it, Gammer, with thee?
Nor on hill nor dale thy flock can I see."

Shepherd

"Peace, I prithee, and hold thy hand—
'Twould seem that Janevier rules the land.

My sheep are penned in hut and fold,
And I am stiffened with wet and cold."

*(Thus it is that March, the rogue,
counts thirty-one days, having
borrowed one from April, as
the saying goes.)*

“NANNA NINNA”

FIGLIO, dormi, dormi, figlio,
Figlio bello, mio vermiglio,
Core caro della Mamma,
Del mio petto dolce fiamma,
Mio bambino piccinino,
Fa' la nanna, figlionino !
Ninna la nanna, nanna ninna,
Dolce e caro, dolce e bello,
Ninna la nanna, nanna ninna,
Dolce e caro mio bambino,
Dolce e bello amorosino.

(*Del sec. XV.*)

LULLABY

(Translation)

SLEEP, my son, sleep, sleep, my son,
Fair my son, my beauteous one !
Thou thy mother's dearest heart,
Sweet flame of my breast thou art.
Baby mine, my little one,
Lullaby, my baby son !
Lullaby and lullaloo,
Sweet and dear, O sweet and fair,
Lullaloo and lullaby,
Sweet and dear, my baby son,
Sweet and fair, my lovely one !

THE MESSAGE OF VENICE

COME again and yet again—
Parting grief is wellnigh pain—
Come again and yet again—
He that goes is ever fain
To return and come again—
Hark ! the bells' melodious strain :
“ *Come again and yet again ;* ”
All thy striving is in vain—
Spell of Venice shall not wane—
“ *Come again and yet again !* ”

NOTES

NOTES

"Casa dell' Angelo." Page 15.

The house yet stands, and the panel with the sculptured angel can be easily seen on the outer wall above the canal.

"Morning Song at Venice." Page 19.

Venice may sometimes hide herself in a cloak of grey mist, or weep sullen tears of rain, but when she smiles she is again the Queen of Loveliness.

"Casa de' Spiriti." Page 21.

"In punta della *Sacca della Misericordia* esiste il *Casino degli Spiriti*, così detto a cagione degli arcani rumori che in esso è fama ascoltarsi, prodotti forse dal vento, oppure a cagione dell' eco, il quale rimanda distintamente dal casino tutte le voci pronunziate all' estremità delle *Fondamente Nuove*, fenomeno ritenuto altre volte dalla superstizione popolare come un prestigio diabolico. Vuole invece il Zanotto che il casino acquistasse tale denominazione perchè era il ritrovo de' più begli

spiriti e talenti del secolo XVI, quali l'Aretino, il Tiziano, ecc. Non sappiamo donde il Zanotto abbia tratto la surriferita notizia."—*Curiosità Veneziane*. G. Tassini.

"Il Casino degli Spiriti."

"Sorge all'estremità della così detta *Sacca della Misericordia*, ed ora, più che ad altro, serve a deposito di legname. Una certa eleganza di struttura e l'amena sua posizione, che domina la laguna coll' isole di S. Michele e di Murano, indicano però che non sempre a tale uso era destinato. Vi fu chi disse che qui nel secolo XVI si raccoglievano a lieto convegno il più begli spiriti dell' epoca, quali l' Aretino, Tiziano, Sansovino, ecc. e que perciò *Casino degli Spiriti* venne chiamato. Ma l' opinione più diffusa è che quì in tempo di notte s'udissero rumori infernali, e si vedessero comparire spiriti folletti. A tale credenza teneva in qualche modo bordone il fatto che la voce di chi sta sulla punta estrema delle *Fondamente Nuove* viene ripetuta dal casino, che oltre il canale, vi sta di faccia, effetto certamente dell' eco, il quale ha pure sempre qualche cosa di misterioso nella fantasia popolare.

Ma chi al giorno d' oggi vorrà credere a tali freddure? Prescindendo anche dall' idea che alcuni, pei loro fini, volessero con artificiali rumori, e fantastiche dicerie, allontanare il popolo da quei

paraggi, non è cosa naturale che quei rumori venissero e vengano tuttora prodotti dal vento, solito ad imperversare in laguna ove è posto il Casino?" — *Aneddoti Storici Veneziani*. G. Nissati.

"A famous grammarian from Rome, Priscian by name, in the month of August, 1540, describes such a party" (*i.e.* a party given by Titian), "the *convives* being Aretino, ('a new miracle of nature,') Sansovino the architect of San Marco, Nardi the Florentine historian, and himself. 'The house,' he says, 'is situated in the extreme part of Venice on the sea, and from it one sees the pretty little island of Murano and other beautiful places. This part of the sea, as soon as the sun went down, swarmed with gondolas, adorned with beautiful women, and resounding with the varied harmony and music of voices and instruments which till midnight accompanied our delightful supper, which was no less beautiful and well arranged than copious and well provided. Besides the most delicate viands and precious wines there were all those pleasures and amusements that were suited to the season, the guests, and the feast.'" — *The Makers of Venice*. Mrs Oliphant.

In his delightful book "The Sea-charm of Venice" Mr Stopford A. Brooke writes as follows of the *Sacca della Misericordia*.

"I left the square" (S. Pietro) "with this noble painting in my mind, and rowed on to the Sacca

della Misericordia beyond the Canal, which leads to the Church of SS. John and Paul. This is a great square piece of the lagoon, surrounded on three sides by sheds and houses, where all the wood used for building in Venice is brought from the mainland, and left floating on the water. The place has always fascinated me, I scarcely know why—for the view of San Michele and Murano and the Alps beyond is seen as well from other points—but I think it partly is that the great trunks and beams, and the sawn planks seasoning in the water, bring back to me the mountain valleys, torrents and knolls of rock where the trees were hewn down, and fill the sea-city with images of the wild landscape of the land ; and partly that one seems to see in the waiting wood all that human hands will make of it—houses, roofs, furniture, bridges, gondolas, barks that will meet the beating of the Adriatic waves, piles that will build foundations for new buildings. The coming human activity moves like a spirit over the floating masses in this tract of water."

"*The Pigeons of Altino.*" Page 26.

"C'est seulement vers la moitié du VII^{me} siècle que les Altinates, s'enfuyant devant les invasions des Huns et des Longobards, s'établirent définitivement dans cette île (Torcello). . . .

Un anonyme habitant d'Altino nous fait croire que les Altinates, avant de se décider à abandonner

leur ville, avaient jeûné trois jours qu'ils auraient passés en prière pour que Dieu daignât leur indiquer le lieu où ils auraient pu trouver un sûr abri contre les incursions des barbares.

‘ Et après le troisième jour, ’ disent les chroniques, ‘ on put voir les colombes tenant leurs petits dans le bec précéder la fuite des hommes et se réfugier dans les îles de la lagune. ’

C'est peut-être à la suite de cette légende que les colombes ont été toujours aimées, respectées, et nourries par les Vénitiens et que l'on en voit encore de nos jours toute leur ville peuplée. . . . Torcello ou Torricello prit probablement son nom des nombreuses tours qu'on y éleva pour la défendre contre les incursions des ennemis.”—*Églises et ‘ Scuole ’ de Venise.* V. Alinari.

“ The year 452, the year of the fall of Aquileia, is usually given as the birth-year of Venice, though such precision is misleading . . . nor was it till the Lombard invasion and the building of Torcello in 568 that all thought of return to the mainland was abandoned, and the history of the lagoon communities which were eventually concentrated at Rialto, the Modern Venice, really begins.”—“ *The Venetian Republic.*” Horatio Brown.

“ *Massariol.*” Page 28.

Massariol, the domestic spirit of the Venetians, is mentioned in Bernoni's *Leggende Fantastiche* as

a "spirito folletto." He plays many pranks, cheats the ferrymen, disguises himself as a baker's lad, brings a foundling and then, himself unseen, carries it away ; he laughs at everyone, and always suddenly disappears.

"Love Song (in imitation of many popular Venetian songs)." Page 35.

Such, for instance, is the following :—

"In mèzo il mare ghe xe un persegaro,
Che fa le fogie de color de rosa.
E ghe xe un gardelin che fa niarò
Soto i balconi de la mia morosa."

Canti del Popolo di Chioggia. A. Dalmedico.

It may be Englished thus :—

In the midst of the sea is a peach-tree,
Its petals the colour of rose ;
And there is a goldfinch that nesteth
'Neath the balconied home of my love.

"Near Verona." Page 37.

Some readers may remember Longfellow's beautiful lines :—

"In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand ;
Lifting the yoke-encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread,

They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapours that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil.
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes
Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word."

"June Song." Page 38.

The mulberry trees are mostly stripped at this time of year, to feed the silkworms, silk being a great part of the commerce of Lombardy. Women, as well as men, take an active share in the work of the fields.

"March and the Shepherd." Page 44.

An English folk-saying is :—

"March borrows of April
Three days, and they are ill ;
April borrows of March again
Three days of wind and rain."

And in the North :—

"March borrowed from April
Three days, and they were ill ;
The first was frost, the second was snaw,
The third was cauld as ever't could blaw."

“*The Message of Venice.*” Page 50.

“‘The word *Venetia*,’ says Francesco Sansovino, ‘is interpreted by some to mean *Veni Etiam*, which is to say, *Come again and again*; for, how many times soever thou shalt come, new things and new beauties thou shalt see.’”—*The Story of Venice*. Thomas Okey.

It may be of interest to insert here a short account, written at the time, of the last Cannaregio procession allowed to take place, i.e. but a few years ago.

“Six o’clock on a warm June afternoon. As we stand on the Cannaregio bridge we can see the ringers up aloft, who, armed with iron rods, are striking the bells in the high tower of San Geremia. Against the pale sky their figures stand out as bronzed and dark as do the bells: not a whit less mechanical.

Around us the crowd gathers fast. A sense of something important about to come fills the balmy air. Everybody hurries to and fro. Innumerable—talking, laughing, gesticulating, slipshod—Venetian girls, all wearing that inevitable black bombazine shawl which hangs forlornly down to their heels but characterizes their nationality, all carrying gaily-coloured fans which they flutter and flirt, have surely one and all of them had their hair dressed, frizzed, curled, and pomatumed, in a

manner most rare and unaccustomed ! The sellers of "fritelle" and other dainties wax eager and insistent.

The bridge is thronged. The sun pours down his hot rays till the stone of the balustrade is burning to touch. From the sharp bend of the Grand Canal into the narrower water-path shoot many gondolas, laden for this one day in the year with the gondoliers' own belongings, *i.e.*, family groups flower-decked, cake and fruit laden, clad in Sunday best, and greatly amused to find themselves thus honoured. Grey-haired fathers and mothers, pretty girls plump and smiling, babies bored and somnolent—fill the boats and sit in stiff unaccustomed attitudes in the seats of the *forestieri*. Each successive boat, as it darts round the angles, flies on to join a clustering mass of gondolas, which will presently be a fine vantage-ground whence to view the procession. For this indeed—the Corpus Domine—is a *festa* that may not be stayed or checked in Venice, planted as it is deep in the very hearts of her people, and firmly grafted in the centre of the poorest of her districts. Have we not been told how once, not long since, it chanced that certain officials, seeking to execute the commands which they had received from higher quarters and thus causing obstruction, were kindly but firmly elbowed by the populace into the canal? The Venetians are chary of discussing such points, yet every one is agreed that this, the most truly popular festival of the year, must be allowed

to have its way and go on its course unmolested.*

Hark ! the bells clamour ; other bells answer ; they tintillate from afar ; San Geremia retorts more loudly. There is great excitement when a white-robed white-sandalled chorister comes swiftly by, or a baby John the Baptist, scantily draped in leopard-skin trimmed with blue ribbons, is carried past by its stalwart father—himself a bronze-cheeked gondolier.

Presently we follow with the stream of people and find ourselves in the Campo San Geremia, waiting as eagerly as the rest of onlookers for the procession to issue from the doors of the church. It comes at last, growing and surging into life. First a great crucifix is carried, then huge candles wreathed with paper flowers, while banners are borne by men of the guild in picturesque dress ; then come little girls clad and veiled in white, bearing sweet lilies, priests with more banners, and choristers singing as they go. Tiny children that scarce can walk are in the procession—baby saints, clothed and decked as such, whose live pet lambs seem older and more self-possessed than their owners. St Francis and St Anthony, whose infant heads are tonsured, toddle beside a three-year-old St^a. Chiara and a St Joseph whose youthful fingers can scarce clasp his staff. Then, when the

* *Yet it did not ! For, however picturesque it might be, it was open to the charge of promoting disorder.*

long-expected canopy comes in sight, the people kneel down on the flag-stones, and uncovered heads are bent.

On goes the procession, swaying away to the left, the feeble flame of candles with the gilding of poles and banners glimmering in the warm daylight, out beyond our ken. We hie to a friend's house in a paved street—a *rio terra*—which seems made up of restaurants, shops, and refreshment booths.

By-and-bye the procession passes us once more, this time close under our windows.

The ground is reddened by the rose-leaves which the children strew on the way. Only one little St John has altogether given in, and drops, fast asleep, on his father's shoulder, still clasping a gilt paper cross, his heavy head pillowed by his chubby naked arm.

Banners, gay bunting, carpets and pieces of silk, deck the balconies where the joyous folk crowd to view the scene. Below, the populace sits and drinks beer or red wine at the street tables—it is to be a night of merriment and carouse. A few lights are already twinkling in paper lamps ; the sky grows softly, tenderly blue ; a star peers out overhead. This is our last night at Venice, and we must hasten through the gay crowd back to our hotel. The great palaces loom grey in the dusk. The myriad faces are blotted out, the murmur of voices dies, and the '*Cannaregio festa*' is already a thing of the past '

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'Gondolas black as the swift that floats o'er an autumn sky—
Gondolas silent and shadowy, wondrously slender of form—
Gliding in close-measured rhythm down where the barges lie,'

or with

'Wherries
Filled with cherries,
Flaunting sails of russet yellow,'

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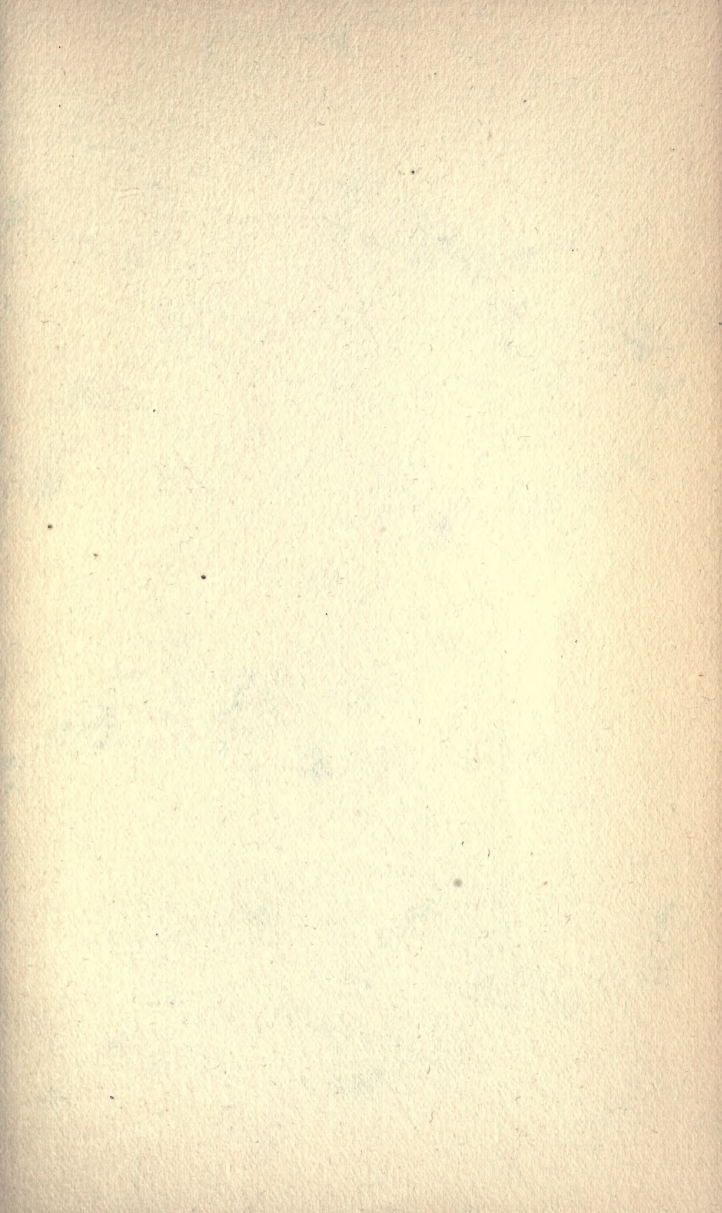
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